

Wycombe Wanderers 4, Hitchin Town 0

WYCOMBE WANDERERS recorded their most impressive victory of the season on Tuesday night when they outplayed a pitifully weak Hitchin Town outfit. After their recent top Isthmian League and Cup outings, Wycombe were able to relax and consequently produced some of their best football.

Poor Hitchin were completely overwhelmed by it all, although to their credit, they fought back well after conceding two goals in the first 20 minutes.

Only three of their players looked Isthmian League class—Martin and Kettleborough in defence and Paul Giggle in attack. One must have sympathies for their mid-field men, however, for they came up against Larry Pritchard at his very best.

The England international, after a slow start to the season, is now on top form. Buzzing around every inch of the pitch, one minute he was setting up attacks and the next right back in the defence to clear any Hitchin danger.

AMOS IMPROVES

It was also pleasing to see Tony Amos's continued improvement. The former Slough Town man is now beginning to fit into the Blues line up and has more understanding with his colleagues. At the back Wycombe were again well served by the towering Olsen who had a double amount of work—although there was little of it—when John Delaney went off late in the second half.

But it is difficult to gauge the true value of Wycombe's victory. Hitchin allowed them to play their own brand of football and were so concerned with defending that stand-in goalkeeper Kevin O'Brien was hardly troubled throughout the 90 minutes.

It took only five minutes for the Blues to break through. After two successive corners, Gamblin floated a long ball into the Hitchin area where Delaney

rose beautifully to power home a superb header through the groping arms of keeper Dave Turner.

Seven minutes later Turner was dispossessed when challenged by Mick Holifield to a through ball and Tony Amos slotted home the second goal into an unguarded net. Both scores came after long periods of Wycombe pressure when they had almost 100 per cent possession.

Their precision passing and intelligent running off the ball tore great holes in the Town defence and although Tony Martin, a British Universities player, worker like a trojan at centre back, he and his team-mates were swamped.

Thanks to Martin's work-rate and some timely interceptions by John Kettleborough, Hitchin managed to weather the early storm. But with only Paul Giggle—allowed acres of space on the top wing—looking dangerous, the raids were for the most part ineffective.

Mick Holifield came close after 39 minutes getting a foot to Searle's cross but it was the centre forward himself who put Wycombe three up. Larry Pritchard's swirling corner was headed towards goal by Delaney and Searle back-headed the ball out of Turners hands. In most similar situations most referees would have given a foul on the keeper, but J. Bayston (Codicote) rightly allowed the goal to stand.

Tony Horseman, on the substitute's bench came on for Rundle at half time and when Delaney limped off after 52 minutes, Wycombe were down to ten men. Williams and Pritchard moved back into defence but John returned after a six minute breather.

TIGHT REIN

Three goals ahead, Wycombe began to become complacent in the second half, Derek Gamblin was guilty of slack defensive work, although he kept a tight rein on Giggle later on.

Trevor Williams gave O'Brien an anxious moment after 75 minutes but sent his header wide from Giggle's cross. Wycombe retaliated four minutes later via Tony Horseman—his first goal for the club this season since re-joining a week ago.

A fine run by the hard working Hutchinson and perfect cross was met by Searle's header which twanged the crossbar. The ball came out to "Bodger" who swept it into the net. Delaney retired amidst applause after the goal but both sides went down to ten men when Bevis was carried off after a nasty crack on the ankle. Gill had earlier come on as sub. for Spriggs.

Hitchin were able to hold out for the last six minutes although Hugh Pratt had to clear one effort off the line just before the whistle.

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WYCOMBE WANDERERS: K. O'Brien, I. Rundle (sub A. Horseman 45 mins.), D. Gamblin, G. Olsen, J. Delaney, R. Williams, A. Amos, L. Pritchard, K. Searle, M. Holifield, J. Hutchinson.

HITCHIN TOWN: D. Turner, H. Pratt, J. Kettleborough, A. Martin, P. Robinson, T. Williams, K. Bevis, R. Spriggs (sub B. Gill 70 mins.), B. Skeggs, A. Garofall, P. Giggle.

Referee: M. J. Bayston (Codicote). **Half time:** 3-0. **Goalscorers:** Wycombe, Delaney (5), Amos (12), Searle (39), Horseman (79).

Actual paying attendance: 1,512.
Approx total attendance: 1,800.